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6. Containers, Wrapping and Packing Materials.
(5 sub-groups)
7. Drugs, Medical and Dental Equipment and Supplies.
(6 sub-groups)
8. Foods.
(9 sub-groups)
9. Household Equipment.
(12 sub-groups)
10. Industrial Equipment.
(19 sub-groups)
11. Jewellery and Timepieces.
(2 sub-groups)
12. Light, Heat and Power: Equipment and Supplies.
(5 sub-groups)
13. Producers' Materials.
(41 sub-groups)
14. Recreation Equipment and Supplies.
(4 sub-groups)

15. Telegraph and telephone.
16. Tobacco and Smokers' Supplies.
17. Vehicles.
(7 sub-groups)

III. CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO ORIGIN:

1. Articles of Agricultural Origin.
(a) Vegetable
(b) Animal.
2. Articles of Marine Origin.
3. Articles of Forest Origin.
4. Articles of Mineral Origin.
5. Articles of Mixed Origin.

Note: Under the above five headings commodities are distinguished as (a) Raw Materials (b) Partly Manufactured Articles and (c) Fully Manufactured Articles, the arrangement of the first classification schedule (component materials) as to sub-heads being followed, in so far as possible.

The League of Nations and International Trade Statistics

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SOON after the formation of the preliminary organizing skeleton of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, it was decided to hold an informal meeting of statisticians in order to consider in a general manner the way in which the new League organization could best assist in the development of international coöperation in statistics and to discuss the relation of the League with the various existing international institutions which dealt with this subject.

There were present at this meeting representatives of the two existing international institutions which were actually at the time publishing comparative statistics monthly—the Institute of Agriculture at Rome and the Bureau of the International Statistical Institute at the Hague.

The former of these two bodies, which has a membership of sixty adhering states, obtains its data directly from the various Governments and publishes, as is well known, an agricultural year book and a monthly bulletin of agricultural and commercial statistics. Perhaps the most important statistical function performed by this institution consists of the estimates of crops in the northern and southern hemispheres, but figures are also published concerning the movement of these crops, freight rates, prices, etc., and the Bureau has proved of considerable utility in suggesting to the various national departments suitable ways in which the existing statistical methods may be changed in order to ensure greater homogeneity and comparability of the data.

The International Institute of Statistics, on the other hand, is mainly a private association, which was founded in 1885. It set up a permanent office in 1913 for the collection, study, co-ordination and publication of statistical material, and to this permanent office certain governments make subventions.

There are, however, in existence, in addition to these two bodies, various other international bureaus likewise concerned with statistics; in particular, the International Bureau of Commercial Statistics founded in 1913 by a Convention signed by twenty-nine states. According to this Convention, the signatory states agreed to submit to the Bureau, which under the terms of the Convention was set up in Brussels, their commercial statistics drawn up according to an agreed classification; and it was proposed that the Bureau should devote its labors to publishing the statistics thus received in a form which would make the trade position of each country easily comparable.

Later, in 1919, there was set up, at a meeting of the General Council of the *Conférence Parlementaire Internationale du Commerce*, an international Institute of Commerce, likewise with its headquarters in Brussels, for the purpose of coördinating and publishing information with regard to commercial statistics and legislation.

It became clear at the preliminary conference, to which allusion has already been made, held in August, 1919, that there was a danger of the activities of these various bodies, which had either already begun or intended to begin the publication of international statistics, overlapping, and that, therefore, if the League desired to utilize their services or could assist them in the performance of their tasks, it was necessary, not only to consider the coördination of the statistics published

by the various Governments of the world, but also the delimitation of the functions of these bodies. The meeting held in London, being of an informal nature, did not consider it desirable to pass any definite resolutions, but suggested, *inter alia*, that it appeared desirable

that a committee should be appointed to consider the definite distribution of statistical work between the various bodies engaged with or proposed to be engaged with the League of Nations and the institution of a central advisory committee on statistics to meet normally at the seat of the League of Nations.

M. Destrée, the representative of Belgium, accordingly suggested at a meeting of the Council of the League of Nations held in Rome on May 19, that an international statistical committee should be appointed, stating in his remarks introducing the motion that:

International statistics are dealt with by certain international commissions and bureaus, under international conventions. Under Article XXIV of the Covenant, any international commission or bureau which may be constituted to deal with such questions is to be placed under the direction of the League of Nations; and if the parties concerned agree, this may also be the case with international commissions and bureaus which are already in existence.

A Conference of statistical experts, which met in London last year through the initiative of the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, expressed the unanimous opinion that it would be of great advantage if all the work in the statistical field, whose accomplishment is a necessity in the political life of nations, could be organized on a uniform and centralized system. Any attempt, however, to realize this desirable object raises problems which can not be solved without the help of experts, both statisticians and persons who make use of statistics.

I propose that, to this end, a Commission be set up on the following lines. The In-

ternational Institute of Statistics should be invited to nominate two representatives and the following bodies one representative each: International Labour Office; International Institute of Agriculture; International Bureau of Commercial Statistics (Brussels). This Committee should be completed by the addition of the following persons, whose work in the past points beyond question to such a choice: M. Lucien March, Mr. R. H. Coats, M. de Elola, M. Luigi Bodio. The Commission thus formed should have power to add to its number by coöpting other eminent statisticians whose collaboration it might desire. At the same time, it should use every effort to keep its numbers as low as possible.

The Council agreed to this proposal and finally set up an international statistical commission on which The International Labour Office at Geneva, The International Institute of Statistics, The International Institute of Agriculture, The International Bureau of Commercial Statistics and The International Institute of Commerce, were represented, and on which M. Lucien March, the Director of the General Statistical Bureau of France; Mr. R. H. Coats, M. de Elola and Mr. A. W. Flux, who held similar positions in Canada, Spain and the United Kingdom, respectively, and also the late Senator Luigi Bodio and M. Naotos Marumo of the Japanese Embassy, were asked to serve.

This Commission accordingly met on October 11, 1920, in Paris, its terms of reference being:

1. To advise the Council of the League of Nations with reference to:

- (a) the extent to which the work of obtaining, collating, examining and publishing International Statistics is already carried out by International Bodies.
- (b) the extent to which the published and unpublished work undertaken by these Bodies requires or will require further coördination.

2. To consider and report upon the desirability of instituting a central advisory council on statistics for the purpose of advising the League of Nations concerning the coördination and standardization of statistics and, further, to report upon the constitution and duties of such a Council, should its institution be recommended.

3. To consider and report upon the relationship of the existing International Statistical Institutions to the League of Nations.

4. To consider in what directions International Statistics require further development and in what manner the League of Nations may profitably assist such development.

What action the Council will ultimately take as a result of the deliberations of this Commission, it is at present too early to foresee.

In the meantime, however, it was necessary for the Secretariat of the League of Nations to proceed with the preparation of such statistics as the administrative work which their duties involved demanded, and, when it was decided in the Spring of 1920 to call an International Financial Conference to discuss the critical situation then arising in Europe, it was, at the same time, agreed to circularize the States invited and request them to supply certain statistical data with reference to their economic and financial situation. The results of the information thus collected were published just before the Brussels Conference in three volumes, the first of which, dealing with currency, gave rates of exchange of the more important countries on New York, discount rates, gold reserves and circulation and a comparison between the internal and external purchasing power of those countries for which wholesale index numbers were obtainable.

The second of these pamphlets gave the Budgets for 1919 and the budget estimates for the current year, National debt figures divided into funded and

unfunded, domestic and foreign, together with figures of loans granted by one government to another.

The third consisted of a collection of the statistics upon trade in values for all the most important countries of the world, yearly figures for the period 1913-1919 and monthly figures from January, 1919, being given. Analytical tables of the principal articles of export and import and the principal countries of origin and destination for the countries receiving the questionnaires were also included and a comparison made, where possible, of the figures for 1919 with those for 1913.

These three pamphlets were prefaced by more or less tentative but, at the same time, suggestive introductions, which attracted a considerable amount of attention at the Brussels' Conference, the summary tables contained in these introductions rendering it possible, as

it had not been possible before, to see at a glance the relative position of the various countries.

It is stated that it is proposed to republish these three pamphlets with additional data obtained as a result of a second questionnaire issued to the Governments and in the light of the supplementary information submitted in the statements of the various delegations at the Brussels' Conference, as volumes supplementary to those containing the full reports of that Conference. It is believed that the work which has thus been begun will not be allowed to drop, although its form may be modified in the light of the experience which has been obtained. What the future activities of the League will be in connection with the more general problem of the collection, coördination and publication of international statistics, it is not possible at this date to foresee.